

# **RICHLAND PARK**

by

✓ Elizabeth McCune

Architecture 522

Professor Peter L. Goss

December 6, 1994

## RICHLAND PARK

Because of the need for low-cost, defense housing in American Fork, Richland Park was created. The following is an account of the history, physical appearance, architecture and social history of Richland Park.

Richland Park is a subdivision that was created in 1943 by Mr. Alan Brockbank. Mr. Brockbank was a real estate broker in Salt Lake City and was also working in the FHA office.

"The United States Government requested the United States Steel Company to build a plant at (Orem) (Geneva) Utah for the war effort. The U.S. Government wanted a steel mill in Utah because there was plenty of coal and iron ore available in both southern Utah and Wyoming. The steel was to be shipped to California where ships were to be built. There was no housing available for the construction workers. A big meeting was held and I decided to go to Utah County to build. Grover Rich was my partner, so we went to American Fork to look for locations. We found two, one on the west side and one on the east side. We built on the west side first and then on the east. This was a very difficult project due to material and labor shortage. U.S. Steel had top priority for available manpower and materials. There was [also] a fixed sale price set by the government."<sup>1</sup>

Richland Park is located in American Fork, Utah, between 200 South and 400 South and along 300 East. The subdivision was named after Grover Rich, Mr. Brockbank's father-in-law. The subdivision was divided into three "blocks" although there are not really three distinct blocks. As stated in the Declaration of Restrictions:

"BLOCK ONE, beginning at a point which is 403.51' east and 1043.96' north 0 31' N. from the west corner of sec. 24, township 5 south, range 1

---

<sup>1</sup>Alan Brockbank's Journal, p. 26.

east, Salt Lake Base and Meridian which point is the N.E. corner of the intersection of 3rd East St. and 2nd South St. in American Fork City, Utah. . . BLOCK TWO, beginning at a point which is 403.51' east and 981.76' north 0 31' East from the West corner of sec. 24, township 5 south, Range 1 East, Salt Lake Base and Meridian, which point is the S.E. corner of the intersection of 3rd East and 2nd South Streets in American Fork City, Utah. . . BLOCK THREE, beginning at a point which is 331.41' East and 981.09' N 0 31' East from the west 1/4 corner of section 24, Township 5 South, Range 1 East, Salt Lake Base and Meridian, which point is the S.W. corner of the intersection of 3rd East and 2nd South Streets, American Fork City, Utah."<sup>2</sup> (map 1 and 2).

Richland Park has not changed in boundary size. With the exception of tree growth and the addition of a church in a former apple orchard, it remains just as it was fifty-one years ago (map 3 and picture 13).

The Declaration of Restrictions was filed on the 21st day of July, 1943, and states the following:

- A. All lots in the tract shall be known and described as residential lots. No structures shall be erected, altered, placed, or permitted to remain on any residential building plot other than one detached single family dwelling not to exceed one and one-half stories in height, except, lots 1 to 5 inc. in Block 3, which shall be two story duplexes. Each plot may have a private garage for no more than two cars. All lots except lots 2 Blk. 1, lots 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18 and 24 block 2, and lots 6 and 27, Block 3, may have a chicken coop, the floor area of which shall not exceed 300 sq. ft. per dwelling unit. The design of the garage and the coops must be approved by the construction committee and must be painted a color harmonious to the house.
- B. No building shall be erected, placed, or altered on any building plot in this subdivision until the building plan, specifications, and plot plan showing the location of such building have been approved in writing as to conformity and harmony of external design with existing structures in the subdivision, and as to the location of the building with respect to topography and finished ground elevation, by a

---

<sup>2</sup>Deed of Restrictions, p. 1 & 2, filed July 21, 1943.

committee composed of Alan E. Brockbank, S. Grover Rich, and D. Eugene Livingston, or by a representative designated by a majority of the members of said committee. . .

- C. No building shall be located nearer to the front lot line or nearer to the side street line than the building set back lines shown on the recorded plat. . .
- D. No residential structure shall be erected or placed on any building plot, which plot has an area of less than 5,000 square feet or a width of less than 50 feet at the front building setback line.
- E. No noxious or offensive trade or activity shall be carried on upon any lot nor shall anything be done thereon which may be or become an annoyance or nuisance to the neighborhood.
- F. No trailer, basement, tent, shack, garage, barn or other outbuilding erected in the tract shall at any time be used as a residence temporarily or permanently, nor shall any structure of a temporary character be used as a residence. . .
- G. No dwelling costing less than \$4,000.00 shall be permitted on any lot in the tract. The ground floor area of the main structure, exclusive of one-story open porches and garages, shall be not less than 650 square feet.
- I. No person of any race other than the Caucasian race shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant.
- J. , Until such time as a sanitary sewer system shall have been constructed to serve this subdivision, a sewage disposal system constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Utah State Board of Health shall be installed to serve each dwelling.

The effluent from septic tanks shall not be permitted to discharge into a stream, storm sewer, open ditch or drain, unless it has been first passed through an absorption field approved by the health authority.

These covenants are to run with the land and shall be binding on all parties and all persons claiming under them until January 1, 1970, at which time said covenants shall be automatically extended

for successive periods of 10 years unless by vote of a majority of the then owners of the lots it is agreed to change said covenants in whole or in part.

If the parties hereto, or any of them, or their heirs or assigns, shall violate or attempt to violate any of the Covenants herein it shall be lawful for any other person or persons owning any real property situated in said development or subdivision to prosecute any proceedings at law or in equity against the person or persons violating or attempting to violate any such Covenant and either to prevent him or them from so doing or to recover damages or other dues for such violation.

Invalidation of any one of these Covenants by judgment or court order shall in no wise affect any of the other provisions which shall remain in full force and effect.

The restrictions herein contained shall be known to be in addition to and not in conflict with the zoning ordinance now in force as enacted by American Fork City, Utah.<sup>3</sup>

Richland Park was created to supply the housing needs of the steel workers. They were working with the government and the houses could not be too fancy or costly.

"The homes were to be two or three bedroom units, some entirely finished, others could be finished later. The ceiling price on the houses was \$6,000, so we could not do anything exotic with them, as they would cost us within a few hundred dollars of the selling price.

As soon as we started building the union organization started to call on us. They wanted all of the people who worked for us to be in the union. Yet they could not help us get any employees, because every able bodied carpenter was working at Geneva, full time and time and a half and double time on Sundays. I could not get anyone to travel from Salt Lake City to American Fork to work. I decided to try something desperate. The United States had built an interment camp for the Japanese called "Topaz", near Delta, Utah. There were several thousand Japanese penned up there. We heard that some of these people had been very good craftsmen on the West Coast. Maybe some of them could handle a saw and a hammer. So we went to Delta and secured about 30 men and later 40 young ladies. These men were real craftsmen! They owned some of the best tools I have ever

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2 - 4.

seen and they could use them. Some of them were so good that we contracted the work with them and just let them go. They were very happy to get out of prison. . . They became some of my best and most trusted friends. Some of them were still with me when we quit building 30 years later. . .

I shall ever remember Harry Hasegawa. He became a floor layer for me and was the last Japanese to leave. He told me that his father had come from Japan to California all by himself and started a small farm near Los Angeles. With frugality and hard work his farm was added to and became larger. Then he found that in order to dispose of all of his crops, he needed a small store in Los Angeles, where he could sell it all. So he sent for his son, Harry. Harry told me that for the first seven days he was in California, he worked in the fields all day and helped build the store all night. He worked until he was so weary he simply dropped from exhaustion.

When Harry laid oak flooring for me, we were trying to build at least one to three houses every day. Harry would work from about 4:00 in the morning, until 11:00 or 12:00 at night to keep up with his work. I never had a single instance where I had to tell him his work was not properly done. (I never had a single question to question him about). When the union representatives would come around, he would hide under the floor or somewhere they could not see him. They would not allow Japanese to join the union, but I would be in trouble if I was caught with any one of Japanese lineage working for me.

I mentioned the 40 Japanese women that worked for me. I could not get anyone to hang or finish sheetrock. So again, I went down to Delta and secured 40 young Japanese women. They were taught how to nail sheetrock and then how to tape it and spackle it and finish it. After a few days of training, these people did a superb job. . ."<sup>4</sup>

Two types of streets were used in this subdivision. There is one main street, 300 East, that runs north and south (picture 1). The other type of street is a cul-de-sac. The three cul-de-sacs that are perpendicular to 300 East are: Yale, Harvard and Princeton (pictures 18, 19, and 20). There are a few houses on the corners of 2nd South and 3rd East but they do not complete a

---

<sup>4</sup>Alan Brockbank's Journal, p. 28 - 29.

whole street (pictures 21 and 22). Originally there was an apple orchard next to the cul-de-sacs, but on October 14, 1954, ground was broken to build a chapel for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The chapel was completed in 1957 and is still there today (picture 13).

There was very basic infrastructure that was provided. An 8 foot easement was put in for utilities (map 1). The basic lines for water were also put in at that time (map 5). Sewer lines and street lighting is now included but they were not originally included. The sewer was added in 1951 (maps 6 and 7). The street lighting was put in shortly after that. The lighting is attached to the electricity poles and are not new, free-standing lamp posts. The lighting they used is metal halide. The city has not yet transferred the lights to halogen (map 8).

Mr. Brockbank made sure that landscaping was a part of his subdivision. A park is behind the homes and that was one of the reasons Mr. Brockbank chose this site to develop his subdivision. The park is on the corner of 200 East and 400 South (map 3). The city, at one time, wanted to put the new armory on this site, but the neighborhood was very unhappy with this idea. Mrs. Slater was one of the main defenders of the park. Her earliest memory of the park was when she was a young girl. Her father played baseball in the summer time for the city of Pleasant Grove, they would come to American Fork to play the American Fork team. She remembers coming in

a horse-drawn buggy and loving every minute that they spent there.<sup>5</sup>

There is not a specific style to these homes. There are three main home plans, but each one has a little different porch and some of the plans are flipped (map 4). There are two house plans that do not coincide with any of the other styles (pictures 14 and 15). <sup>← Cape Cod Hse.</sup> One home was either torn down and totally rebuilt or remodeled in such a way that it does not look like any of the other homes (picture 6). Duplexes were also built along 2nd South (pictures 16 and 17). There was no specific reason for putting the homes where they did. The homes were in such demand that they just built them. There were no model homes erected because they were to be rental housing. Of the fifty-nine homes that were built, only four homes were sold. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Slater were one of the four original owners, and they still live in the subdivision. He bought their home in January, 1944, and they moved in in April, 1944. Mr. Slater was one of the few Utahans that actually worked on the subdivision. For about nine years after the development was finished, he and his wife took care of the homes. Anytime a family moved in or out, they were in charge of making sure the homes were clean. Landscaping was included in the subdivision and Mr. Slater was in charge of caring for the lawns.<sup>6</sup>

"As the war started to wind down, so did the number of employees at Geneva Steel. When the war came to an end, we were released from having to get a permit to sell to a buyer from the War Production Board. It was at this point that the Housing

---

<sup>5</sup>Personal interview with Mr. & Mrs. Slater, Nov. 22, 1994.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1994.



Administration Sales raised the price we could sell our houses for, from \$6,000.00 to \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00. This was a very great help, because I woke up one day to find out that if I sold every one of the remaining homes, I would still be in debt. Finally I got finished with a considerable profit. We finished in 1945 and almost the same day, I went over to what is now Rose Park and purchased the first lots, on 4th North, just west of 9th West.<sup>7</sup>

The homes had approximately 975 square feet and were quite small (floor plan). The homes were originally made of brick or shingle siding. The homes had new and used wood in the rafters, and the floor joists were new. The only insulation was a thin sheet of kempfle. Oak flooring was used throughout the entire house, and asphalt shingles were used on the roof. The gas meter box was inside the home. The basements were not finished but there was an 8' x 6' room for coal. On the outside of the house there was a coal shoot. Mrs. Helen Christensen remembers having the job of going outside and putting coal into that shoot. It can still be seen on her house although they blocked it off when they finished their basement (picture 23). All the heating vents were on the inside walls. No vents were placed on the outside walls of any house.<sup>8</sup>

All of the homes exist today with the exception of the one house (picture 6). This house was either added on to or was torn down and a new house was built in its place. Considerable changes have been made to the homes and the lots. Almost all of the homes that had shingle siding have

---

<sup>7</sup>Alan Brockbank's Journal, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup>Personal interview with Mr. & Mrs. Christensen, Nov. 30, 1994.

changed to vinyl siding (pictures 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9). In many of the homes the windows have been replaced (pictures 4, 8, 10 and 11). Many homeowners have added garages or carports (pictures 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Wings have been added on the back to many homes. The lots are quite large so there was space to add on. Mrs. Slater said that most of the residents have either added several bedrooms or have added on to the kitchen and dining rooms (picture 12).<sup>9</sup>

Most of the fronts of the homes have remained the same. Some homeowners have changed the porches by adding on or by re-designing them (pictures 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11). Many of the homes have added awnings to their front windows to shield them from the morning sun and the inclement weather (pictures 2, 3, 5 and 7).

As stated earlier, the earliest residents were the workers at Geneva Steel Company. They rented the homes until the time that Mr. Brockbank was allowed to sell them. The socio-economic background was lower middle-class. Union workers lived there through its beginning years, and the socio-economic background has changed little since that time. The residents do not seem to have been able to pull themselves out of the lower middle-class economic standing. Although they do not make up the majority of the residents, there are a few older couples in the neighborhood that seem to be doing quite well. As stated in the Deed of Restrictions, no one, other than Caucasians, were

---

<sup>9</sup>Personal interview with Mr. & Mrs. Slater, Nov. 22, 1994.

allowed to live in this subdivision, and this condition seems to have remained the same. As I observed the residents that were coming and going from their homes, I did not see a change within this neighborhood.

Richland Park definitely served its purpose in providing affordable, quality homes for the workers of Geneva Steel. It was created in 1943 by Mr. Alan Brockbank during the height of World War II. The homes were, and are, small but provided shelter for the workers in the much-needed industry of steel. Despite the discrimination in the Deed of Restrictions, as to race, it remains a very functional subdivision and still continues to serve its purpose.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brockbank, Alan E. Alan Brockbank's Journal (unpublished), 26 - 30.

Brockbank, Gaylie Rich. Personal interview, November 28, 1994.

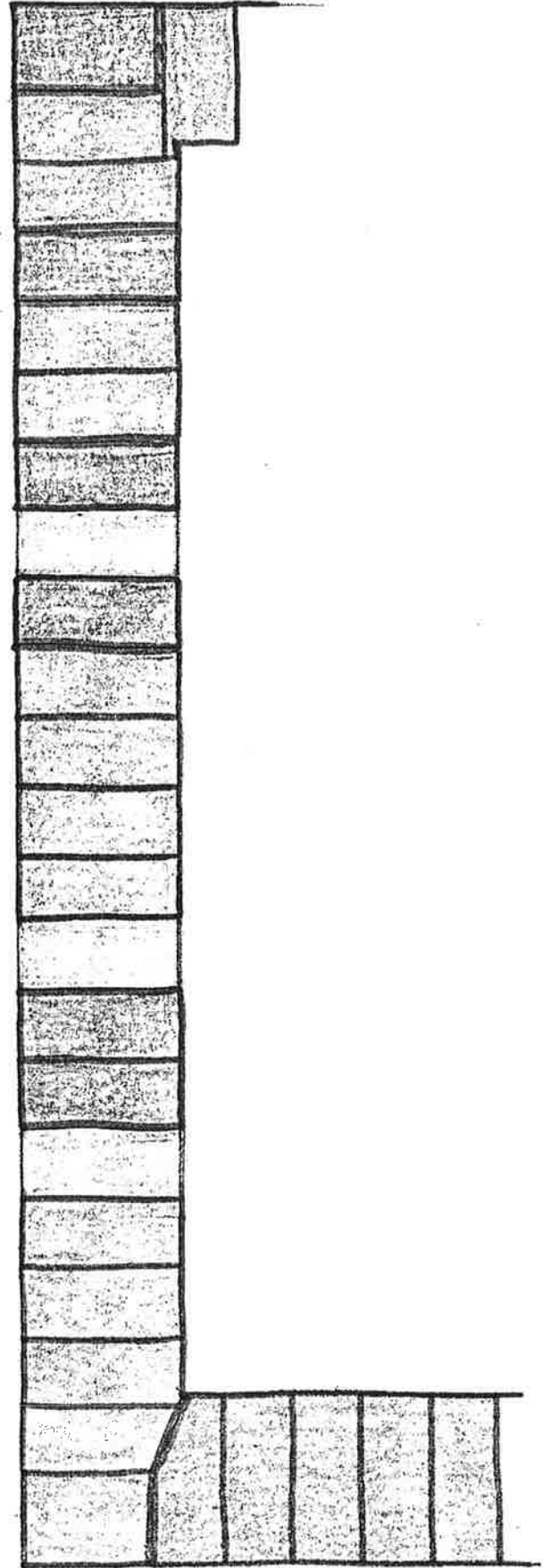
Christensen, Mr. and Mrs. Personal interview, November 30, 1994.

Deed of Restrictions. Filed July 21, 1943, Utah County.

Moorehead, Gaylie Brockbank Savage. Telephone conversation, November 21, 1994.

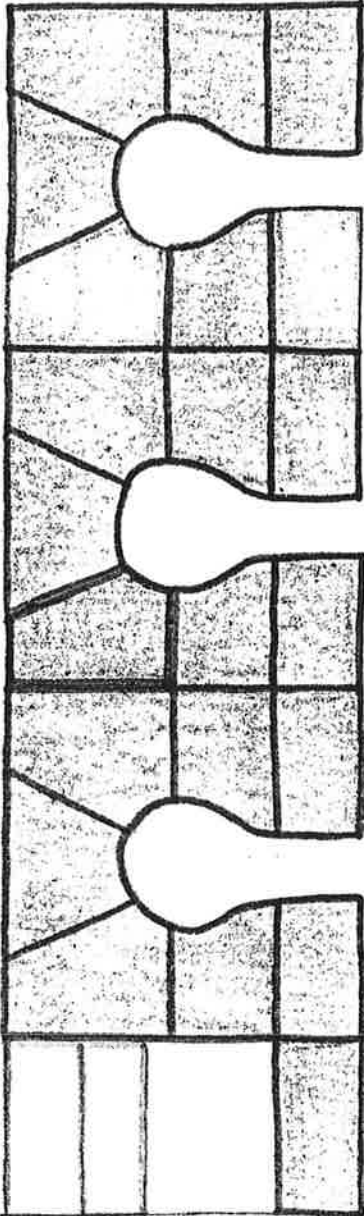
Slater, Mr. and Mrs. Roy. Personal interview, November 22, 1994.

400 SOUTH



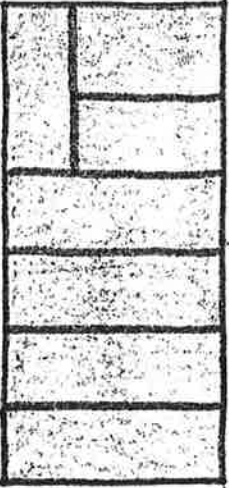
200 SOUTH

300 EAST



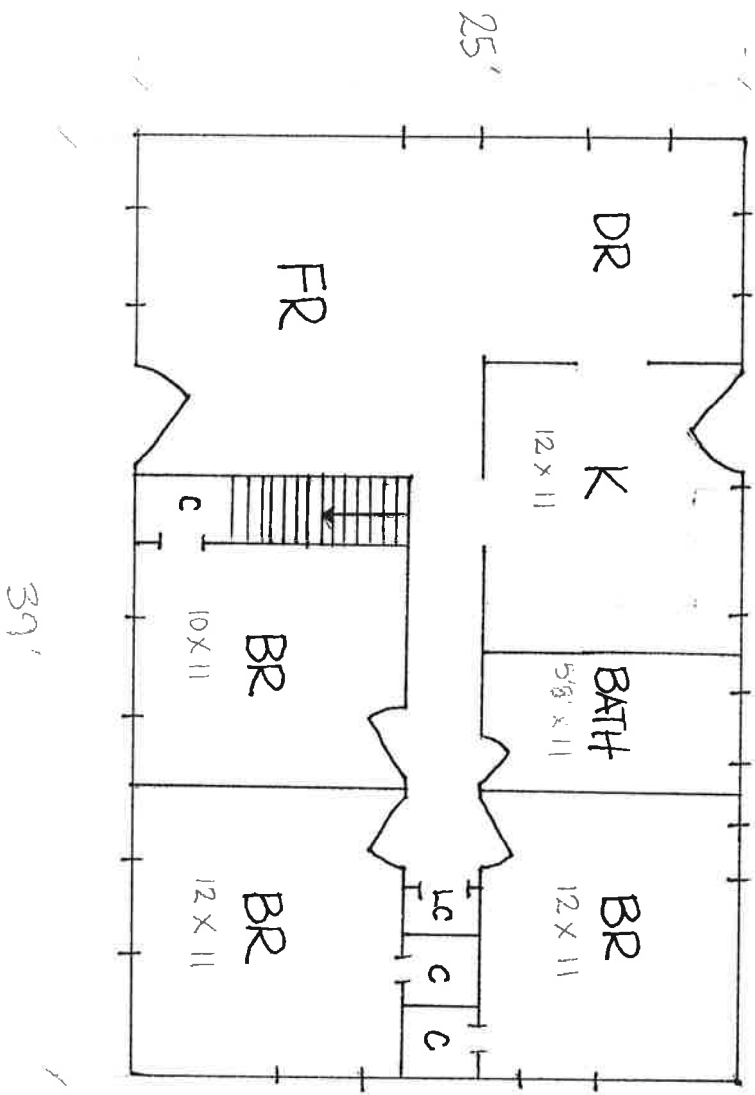
200 SOUTH

300 EAST



CODE FOR PLACEMENT OF HOMES

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1-picture 3  | 6-picture 15 |
| 2-picture 9  | 7-picture 16 |
| 3-picture 12 |              |
| 4-picture 6  |              |
| 5-picture 14 |              |



51002 PLAN FOR ONE  
 OF THE HOMES "1"  
 975 TOTAL SQ. FT.  
 FULL BASEMENT BELOW